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DIRECTOR

SECTION ONE, ^{TWO & THREE} OF THREE.

PLEASE PASS FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO WALT ROSTOW, WHITE HOUSE,
FROM AMBASSADOR LOCKE.

(TEXT CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

C/S COMMENT: DISSEMINATION RESTRICTED. TEXT DIRECTED TO ANOTHER
U.S. GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION.

DATE: 24 NOVEMBER 1967

RECEIVED 240958Z
IN 99377FROM: SAIGON ☐ 3.5(c)

TO: DIRECTOR

REF: CAP-67973

1. THE FOLLOWING IS A REVIEW OF AVAILABLE DOCUMENTATION ON THE WINTER-SPRING CAMPAIGN, COALITION GOVERNMENT, NEGOTIATIONS, AND FRONT'S NEW PROGRAM. IT IS CLEAR THAT MUCH OF WHAT THE ENEMY DIRECTS IN THE DOCUMENTS CITED IS FAR BEYOND HIS REALISTIC CAPABILITIES. WE ARE UNDERTAKING A STUDY WHICH WILL EVALUATE THIS MATERIAL IN THE LIGHT OF CURRENT AND RECENT ENEMY MILITARY ACTION AND OTHER PERTINENT EVIDENCE. THIS STUDY WILL BE FORWARDED WITHIN TWO WEEKS.

2. BASED ON A NUMBER OF INDICATORS, INCLUDING CAPTURED DOCUMENTS, PRISONER INTERROGATIONS AND OFFICIAL STATEMENTS BY VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST LEADERS, IT APPEARS THAT COMMUNIST STRATEGY TOWARD VIETNAM WAR IS IN STATE OF FLUX. IT IS TOO EARLY, HOWEVER, TO DETERMINE WITH PRECISION WHAT IS IN TRAIN. OVER PAST THREE MONTHS, NUMBER OF IMPORTANT THEMES HAVE EMERGED. THE MOST IMMEDIATE, ALTHOUGH NOT FIRST, IS WINTER-SPRING CAMPAIGN NOW BEING CONDUCTED BY VIET CONG (VC). THIS CAMPAIGN

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IS BEING DESCRIBED AS THE DECISIVE PHASE OF WAR, AND JUDGING FROM BATTLES OF LOC NINH AND DAK TO, VC SEEM TO BE MAKING ALL OUT EFFORT, REGARDLESS OF LOSSES, TO INFLICT A DEFEAT ON ALLIED FORCES. AT SAME TIME, VC HAVE BEGUN TO STRESS FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT. CAPTURED DOCUMENTS ARE REplete WITH SUCH REFERENCES, AND NEW PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM (NFLSV) WAS, INTER ALIA, A CALL FOR OTHER GROUPS TO JOIN WITH FRONT IN OPPOSING GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN). FINALLY, UNLIKE THE SITUATION PREVAILING, UNTIL AUGUST 1967, POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS IS NOT BEING MENTIONED OR IF IT IS, IT IS IN VERY HARD LINE CONTEXT. THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS WILL BRIEFLY SUMMARIZE DATA WE HAVE ON ABOVE THEMES AND CITE THE MAJOR REFERENCES.

WINTER-SPRING CAMPAIGN

3. ACCORDING TO CAPTURED DOCUMENTS VC WINTER-SPRING CAMPAIGN (BEGINNING OCTOBER 1967) IS BEING EXPLAINED AS "DECISIVE, HISTORICAL" STAGE OF REVOLUTION WHICH WILL BRING ABOUT MAJOR "TURNING POINT" IN WAR AND WHICH WILL DECIDE ITS ULTIMATE OUTCOME. VC CITE SITUATION AS BEING VERY FAVORABLE TO THEM BECAUSE MILITARILY ALLIES ARE BOGGED DOWN IN STRATEGICALLY,

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THOUGH NOT TACTICALLY, DEFENSIVE POSTURE. IN ADDITION, UNITED STATES IS INCREASINGLY ISOLATED INTERNATIONALLY AND TAKEN BY DISSENSION INTERNALLY. THESE FACTORS PLUS IMPENDING 1955 ELECTIONS APPARENTLY LEAD VC TO BELIEVE THAT CURRENT U.S. ADMINISTRATION WILL WANT TO END WAR BEFORE FALL OF 1955.

4. VC ALSO SEE ADVANTAGES FOR THEMSELVES IN SITUATION PREVAILING IN SOUTH VIETNAM (SVN). THEY VIEW CURRENT GVN AS CORRUPT, UNPOPULAR AND INCAPABLE OF GAINING ALLEGIANCE OF BULK OF POPULATION. IN EFFECT, VC TAKE HOPE FROM APPARENT DIVISIVE FACTORS WITHIN GVN, ESPECIALLY LATENT REVALRY BETWEEN THIEU AND KY, AND EXISTENCE OF VARIOUS ANTI-GOVERNMENT GROUPS SUCH AS MILITANT BUDDHISTS AND DISAPPOINTED CANDIDATES LEFT IN WAKE OF SEPTEMBER ELECTIONS. FROM THIS AMALGAM OF DISPARATE GROUPS, VC APPARENTLY EXPECT TO SEE AN INCREASING AMOUNT OF DISSENSION AND TURMOIL IN SOUTH VIETNAMESE SOCIETY WHICH THEY CAN EXPLOIT, IF NOT LEAD. IN COUNTRYSIDE, VC HAVE ASSIDUOUSLY DIRECTED ACTIVITIES TO DISRUPT REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, AND APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT GVN ARMED FORCES ARE SUFFERING FROM SERIOUS MORALE PROBLEMS AND ARE INCAPABLE OF ADVANCING OR PROTECTING THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM.

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5. AS RESULT OF THEIR ASSESSMENT, VC STATE THAT THEY CURRENTLY POSSESS BOTH MILITARY AND POLITICAL INITIATIVE AND ARE IN VERY FAVORABLE POSITION FOR BRINGING WAR TO A VICTORIOUS CONCLUSION DURING 1968. THE STATED OBJECTIVES OF THIS CAMPAIGN INCLUDE:

A. DEFEAT OF MAJOR PORTION OF BOTH U.S. AND GVN MILITARY FORCES;

B. DESTRUCTION OF GVN'S ADMINISTRATIVE APPARATUS IN COUNTRYSIDE, THEREBY ENABLING VC TO GAIN CONTROL OF ALMOST ALL OF RURAL POPULATION;

C. INSTIGATION OF POLITICAL TURMOIL AND DEMONSTRATIONS IN CITIES, WHICH WILL CULMINATE IN "GENERAL UPRISING" RESULTING IN OVERTHROW OF PRESENT GVN;

D. FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT BETWEEN VC AND OTHER GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS NOT AFFILIATED WITH NLSV.

E. VC GOALS ARE TO BE ACHIEVED THROUGH COORDINATED AND COHERENT

MILITARY AND

POLITICAL OFFENSIVE UTILIZING ALL VC ASSETS.

IN EFFECT, VC HOPE TO IMPLEMENT THROUGHOUT SVN THEIR MUCH VAUNTED "THREE-PRONGED" OFFENSIVE, NAMELY MILITARY PRESSURE, POLITICAL AGITATION, AND MILITARY PROSELYTING. TO THIS END, VC MAIN

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FORCES ARE TO ATTACK MAJOR ALLIED UNITS AND TO FORCE THE REDEPLOYMENT OF ALLIED TROOPS FROM HEAVILY POPULATED AREAS INTO HIGHLANDS. THERE, VC HOPE TO KEEP ALLIES TIED DOWN IN STATIC DEFENSIVE POSITIONS. THEY ANTICIPATE THAT THIS WILL ALLOW VC TO MOVE INTO LOWLANDS AND WILL INCREASE THEIR ABILITY TO OBTAIN MUCH NEEDED RICE AND OTHER SUPPLIES FROM THESE AREAS. AT THE SAME TIME, HEAVY CASUALTIES ARE TO BE INFLICTED, ESPECIALLY ON AMERICAN UNITS, AND SOME LARGE ALLIED COMBAT FORMATIONS, BATTALION TO BRIGADE SIZE, ARE SUPPOSED TO BE COMPLETELY DESTROYED.

7. ELSEWHERE, OTHER VC MAIN FORCES COMBINED WITH LOCAL FORCES ARE TO ATTEMPT TO EXPAND LIBERATED AREAS BY LAUNCHING CONTINUOUS ATTACKS ON PACIFICATION TEAMS, LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS AND REAR BASES. REFUGEES ARE TO BE URGED TO RETURN TO FORMER HOMES IN VC AREAS AND AT LEAST 75 PERCENT OF CURRENT SVN-CONTROLLED AREAS ARE TO BE "LIBERATED."

8. IN URBAN AREAS SPECIAL ACTION UNITS ARE TO ENGAGE IN WIDESPREAD TERRORISM AND SABOTAGE; IN ALL MAJOR CITIES IN SVN. THESE ACTIVITIES ARE TO BE COORDINATED WITH MILITARY ATTACKS ON THE CITIES FROM WITHOUT AND THE INSTIGATION OF POLITICAL

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TURMOIL IN THE URBAN AREAS.

9. FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS CONTAIN BEST INFORMATION
CURRENTLY AVAILABLE CONCERNING NEWLY INITIATED VC WINTER-
SPRING CAMPAIGN:

CDEC LOG NO. 12-1698-67

CDEC LOG NO. 13-2255-67

CDEC LOG NO. 12-2038-67

CDEC LOG NO. 12-1558-67

CDEC LOG NO. 12-1282-67

CDEC LOG NO. 11-1209-67

CDEC LOG NO. 11-1353-67

CDEC LOG NO. 11-1375-67

CDEC LOG NO. 10-1811-67

CDEC LOG NO. 11-1206-67

CDEC LOG NO. 11-1501-67

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CDEC LOG NO. 11-1583-67

CDEC LOG NO. 11-1591-67

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COALITION GOVERNMENT

12. 1966 RESOLUTION OF COSVN (LAO DONG 12TH RESOLUTION) CONTAINED REFERENCES TO NEED TO INTENSIFY "THE FRONT FOR NATIONAL UNITY" AND CALLED FOR STRUGGLE TO "DEMAND THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS, TO OVERTHROW THE LACKEY REGIME, AND TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC COALITION GOVERNMENT." AS EARLY AS OCTOBER 1966 THERE WERE REPORTS OF INTEREST IN REVIVING DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN ANTICIPATION OF GENERAL ATTACK AND GENERAL REVOLT, THEN SCHEDULED FOR EARLY 1967, WHICH WOULD RESULT IN FORMATION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT IN LIBERATED PROVINCES. INDOCTRINATION COURSES FOR NVA PERSONNEL ON THE 12TH RESOLUTION DISCUSSED OPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR COALITION GOVERNMENT IN EVENT THAT VC DID NOT WIN COMPLETE VICTORY, I.E., VICTORY WHICH WOULD MEAN

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OUTRIGHT VC CONTROL AND SOCIALIZATION OF SVN. THE COALITION GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, WOULD BE CONSIDERED A "DECISIVE" VICTORY, I.E., SOMETHING LESS THAN A COMPLETE VICTORY.

11. BA TRA, INTELLECTUAL PROSELYTING CADRE ARRESTED IN SAIGON ON 26 MAY 1967, EXPLAINED THAT THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY HAD ABANDONED THE IDEA OF ESTABLISHING A "RESISTANCE" GOVERNMENT AND HAD TURNED ITS ATTENTION TO "COALITION" GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD DEPEND TO LARGE EXTENT ON COOPERATION OF SYMPATHETIC INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE OF NFLSV. BA TRA STATED THAT REFERENCES TO COALITION GOVERNMENT IN 1966 RESOLUTION OF COSVN HAD BEEN DISSEMINATED ONLY FROM PROVINCE COMMITTEE UP AND WERE NOT MENTIONED AT LOWER LEVELS, LEST IT REDUCE THE CADRES' FIGHTING SPIRIT. HE EXPLAINED THAT NEW POLICY WAS PREDICATED ON BALANCE OF FORCES IN THE WORLD AND WITHIN VIETNAM. HE ALSO SPOKE OF NEED FOR BROADER "COALITION FRONT" WHICH WOULD BACK UP COALITION GOVERNMENT.

12. POLITICAL REORIENTATION COURSES GIVEN IN MAY AND JUNE 1967 ON THE 13TH RESOLUTION, WHICH WAS SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE 12TH RESOLUTION, APPARENTLY EXPANDED ON THIS THEME AND PERMITTED IT TO SEEP DOWN TO LOWER LEVELS, ALTHOUGH COALITION GOVERNMENT CONCEPT

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AS SUCH WAS NOT REGULAR FEATURE OF SUCH COURSES. THESE COURSES SUGGESTED THE TEMPORARY ACCEPTANCE OF LESSER GOALS THAN COMPLETE VICTORY AND NOTED THAT AFTER THE GENERAL UPRISING "DESPITE THE EXISTENCE OF A CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, THE GOVERNMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD BE IN OUR HANDS."

13. THE COMMUNIQUE ON 20 AUGUST 1967 EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF THE NFLSV CALLED FOR A "NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC COALITION GOVERNMENT," BUT CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, REFERENCES ON COALITION GOVERNMENT THEN SUBSIDED AT LOWER LEVELS. IN OCTOBER 1967, HOWEVER, RASH OF REFERENCES TO COALITION GOVERNMENT POLICY REAPPEARED IN CONNECTION WITH "HISTORICAL PHASE" OF THE 1967-1968 WINTER-SPRING CAMPAIGN.

14. WITHIN CONCEPT OF THIS CAMPAIGN, VC VIEW COALITION GOVERNMENT AS PRODUCT OF GENERAL UPRISING OF THE PEOPLE OF SVN AGAINST THE PRESENT GVN AND AS MEANS TO SECURE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS. ALTHOUGH THERE IS INSISTENCE THAT COALITION GOVERNMENT BE CONTROLLED BY THE NFLSV, IT IS ADMITTED THAT COALITION WOULD NOT BE FINAL VICTORY, BUT ONLY STEP FORWARD SINCE "LETHAL BLOW" CANNOT BE DEALT ALLIED FORCES AT THIS TIME. INDEED, VC IN ONE CAPTURED DOCUMENT EXPLAINED THAT COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT EVEN HAVE TO

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BE HEADED BY FRONT MEMBER, ALBEIT THE DOCUMENT WAS QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT HEAD OF COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO FOLLOW FRONT'S PROGRAM. MOREOVER, EVEN THOUGH CURRENTLY CONSTITUTED GVN COULD NOT BE INVOLVED IN COALITION GOVERNMENT, SOME INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS-- UNSPECIFIED--MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE AT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL. VC APPARENTLY FELT IT MORE IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN CONTROL AT BOTTOM AND IN ARMED FORCES RATHER THAN AT TOP; IN OTHER WORDS, THEY SEEMED TO BE SAYING THAT AS LONG AS THEY HELD REAL LEVERS OF POWER, IT DID NOT MUCH MATTER WHO HAD THE TRAPPINGS OF AUTHORITY. BENEATH CENTRAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT, THE VC BEGAN TO HEDGE CONCEPT OF COALITION IN ORDER TO ENHANCE VC POSITION. AT VILLAGE LEVEL, MOREOVER, ADMINISTRATION HAD TO BE HELD BY VC. FURTHER, VC CONSIDERED IT ESSENTIAL THEY CONTROL ARMED FORCES. FINALLY, AMERICANS WOULD HAVE TO AGREE TO WITHDRAW THEIR FORCES WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, ALTHOUGH COALITION GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE ESTABLISHED BEFORE ALL AMERICANS LEFT.

15. FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS CONTAIN REFERENCES TO COALITION GOVERNMENT:

CDEC LOG NO. 02-1854-67

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CDEC LOG NO. 10-1556-67

CDEC LOG NO. 10-1995-67

CDEC LOG NO. 09-1983-67

CDEC LOG NO. 10-1657-67

CDEC LOG NO. 11-1209-67

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NEGOTIATIONS

16. SINCE AT LEAST PROMULGATION OF LAO DONG 12TH RESOLUTION IN DECEMBER 1965, VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS HAVE PAID CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS AND CONDITIONS FOR, AND SIGNIFICANCE OF, THEIR BEING HELD. NEGOTIATIONS, OR MORE SPECIFICALLY "NEGOTIATING WHILE FIGHTING," BEGAN TO BE MENTIONED IN CAPTURED VC DOCUMENTS DATED 1966 AND BECAME A RATHER COMMON THEME IN FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1967. THEME WAS PUT MOST CLEARLY

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IN SPEECH GIVEN BY NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) GENERAL NGUYEN VAN VINH, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE NVA, TO MEETING OF CENTRAL OFFICE FOR SOUTH VIETNAM (COSVN) CONGRESS IN APRIL 1966. VINH STATED THAT "FIGHTING CONTINUES UNTIL THE EMERGENCE OF A SITUATION WHERE BOTH SIDES ARE FIGHTING INDECISIVELY. THEN A SITUATION WHERE FIGHTING AND NEGOTIATIONS ARE CONDUCTED SIMULTANEOUSLY MAY EMERGE." FROM VINH'S VANTAGE, WAR WOULD PROCEED THROUGH 1) THE FIGHTING STATE; 2) THE STAGE OF FIGHTING WHILE NEGOTIATING; AND 3) NEGOTIATIONS AND THE SIGNING OF AGREEMENTS. AFTER THIS, QUESTION OF WHETHER WAR WOULD RESUME WOULD DEPEND ON BALANCE OF FORCES; IF COMMUNISTS COULD DOMINATE SITUATION WITHOUT WAR, THEN THEY WOULD NOT RESORT TO MILITARY TACTICS ANEW; IF THEY COULD NOT, THEY OBVIOUSLY WOULD RETURN TO MILITARY ACTION.

17. THIS MORE OR LESS CONTINUED TO BE GENERAL LINE ADVANCED BY THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS THROUGHOUT 1966. IN 1967, MOREOVER, AN EVEN GREATER EMPHASIS SEEMED TO BE PLACED ON POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS, OR AT LEAST "TALKS." THIS, OF COURSE, WAS MOST APPARENT IN THE INTERVIEW OF NORTH VIETNAM (NVN) FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DUY TRINH WITH AUSTRALIAN JOURNALIST

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WILFRED BURCHETT IN JANUARY 1967. THIS THEME WAS ALSO STRESSED IN CAPTURED DOCUMENTS THROUGHOUT EARLY SUMMER OF 1967, SOME DOCUMENTS EVEN GOING SO FAR AS TO STATE THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE HELD BEFORE YEAR'S END.

18. SINCE 31 AUGUST ANNOUNCEMENT OF NFLSV'S "NEW PROGRAM," HOWEVER, REFERENCES TO NEGOTIATIONS HAVE PRACTICALLY DISAPPEARED FROM CAPTURED DOCUMENTS. AT SAME TIME, NVN LEADERS HAVE REVERTED TO HARD LINE CONCERNING NEGOTIATIONS, AS FOR EXAMPLE, IN NVN PREMIER PHAM VAN DONG'S SPEECH ON 31 AUGUST 1967. IN ANY EVENT, NEGOTIATIONS ARE INVARIABLY DESCRIBED AS PART OF CONTINUING STRUGGLE, AND HEAVY STRESS IS LAID UPON NECESSITY FOR FIGHTING EVEN HARDER WHILE NEGOTIATIONS TAKE PLACE AND UPON AVOIDANCE OF ANY "ILLUSIONS ABOUT PEACE".

19. FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS CONTAIN BEST INFORMATION CURRENTLY AVAILABLE CONCERNING VIET CONG ATTITUDES TOWARDS NEGOTIATIONS:

CDEC LOG NO. 01-3225-67, PP. 15-17

CDEC LOG NO. 02-1846-67, PP. 13-16

CDEC LOG NO. 01-3398-67, PP. 22-24

CDEC LOG NO. 04-3379-67, P. 14

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CDEC LOG NO. 08-1744-67

CDEC LOG NO. 08-1805-67

CDEC LOG NO. 09-1373-67

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